

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of reducing transfer of a first sample subjected to filtration to the remainder of a subsequent sample, a portion of which was filtered by the same instrument, said method comprising:

a) drawing fluid from a first sample vial containing a first sample through a first filter using the instrument,

b) decontaminating surfaces of the instrument so as to remove first sample released as aerosol by the filter or dropped by gravity flow from the filter;

c) removing the first filter and replacing with a second filter;

d) drawing fluid from a second sample vial containing a second sample through the second filter using the instrument,

whereby the step of decontaminating reduces transfer of the first sample to any remaining portion of the second sample in the second sample vial.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein decontamination is achieved by wiping with a liquid absorbent material.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein decontaminating is achieved by contacting the surface with liquid decontaminating solution.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said liquid decontaminating solution is a disinfectant.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the disinfectant is a solution of bleach.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the filter is contained within the instrument and mounted at one end of a tube shaped hollow element and wherein the other end of the tube shaped hollow element is mounted to and in fluid communication with a filter cap assembly which functions to fluidly link the filter to a pressure source.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the said instrument surfaces are in the same compartment of the instrument as the filter.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein surfaces of the filter cap assembly are decontaminated.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the instrument is a ThinPrep® 2000 Processor or similar such instrument.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein after step d), the remainder of the second sample in the second sample vial is subject to nucleic acid amplification.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the first or second sample is selected from the group consisting of a blood containing sample, a cervical cells containing sample, and a fine needle biopsy containing sample.

12. A method of reducing transfer of a first sample subjected to filtration by a ThinPrep® 2000 Processor instrument or similar such instrument to the remainder of a subsequent sample, a portion of which was filtered by the same instrument, said method comprising:

a) drawing fluid from a first sample vial containing a first sample through a first filter using the instrument,

b) decontaminating surfaces of the instrument so as to remove first sample released as aerosol by the filter or dropped by gravity flow from the filter;

c) removing the first filter and loading a second filter into the instrument; and

d) drawing liquid fluid from a second sample vial containing a second sample through the second filter using the instrument

whereby the step of decontaminating reduces transfer of the first sample to any remaining portion of the second sample in the second sample vial.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein decontamination is achieved by wiping with a liquid absorbent material.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein decontaminating is achieved by contacting the surface with liquid decontaminating solution.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said liquid decontaminating solution is a disinfectant.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the disinfectant is a solution of bleach.

17. The method of claim 12 wherein the instrument contains a filter cap assembly which is subjected to decontamination.

18. The method of claim 12 wherein after step d) the remainder of the second sample in the second sample vial is subjected to nucleic acid amplification.

19. The method of claim 12 wherein the sample is selected from the group consisting of a blood containing sample, a cervical cells containing sample, and a fine needle biopsy containing sample.

20. A method of reducing transfer of nucleic acid from a first sample subjected to filtration to the remainder of a subsequent sample, a portion of which was filtered by the same instrument, said method comprising:

a) drawing fluid from a first sample vial containing a first sample through a first filter using the instrument,

b) decontaminating surfaces of the instrument so as to remove, denature or destroy nucleic acid from the first sample released as aerosol by the filter or dropped by gravity flow from the filter;

c) removing the first filter and replacing with a second filter;

d) drawing fluid from a second sample vial containing a second sample through the second filter using the instrument,

whereby the step of decontaminating reduces the amount of nucleic acid transferred from the first sample to any remaining portion of the second sample in the second sample vial.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein decontamination is achieved by wiping with a liquid absorbent material.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein decontaminating is achieved by contacting the surface with liquid decontaminating solution.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein said liquid decontaminating solution is a disinfectant.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the disinfectant is a solution of bleach.

25. The method of claim 20 wherein the filter is contained within the instrument and mounted at one end of a tube shaped hollow element and wherein the other end of the tube shaped hollow element is mounted to and in fluid communication with a filter cap assembly which functions to fluidly link the filter to a pressure source.

26. The method of claim 20 wherein the said instrument surfaces are in the same compartment of the instrument as the filter.

27. The method of claim 20 wherein surfaces of the filter cap assembly are decontaminated.

28. The method of claim 20 wherein the instrument is a ThinPrep® 2000 Processor or similar such instrument.

29. The method of claim 20 wherein after step d), the remainder of the second sample in the second sample vial is subject to nucleic acid amplification.

30. The method of claim 20 wherein the first or second sample is selected from the group consisting of a blood containing sample, a cervical cells containing sample, and a fine needle biopsy containing sample.

31. A method of reducing transfer of nucleic acid from a first sample subjected to filtration by a ThinPrep® 2000 Processor or similar such instrument to the remainder of a subsequent sample, a portion of which was filtered by the same instrument, said method comprising:

a) drawing fluid from a first sample vial containing a first sample through a first filter using the instrument,

b) decontaminating surfaces of the instrument so as to remove, denature or destroy nucleic acid from the first sample released as aerosol by the filter or dropped by gravity flow from the filter;

c) removing the first filter and loading a second filter into the instrument; and

d) drawing liquid fluid from a second sample vial containing a second sample through the second filter using the instrument

whereby the step of decontaminating reduces the amount of nucleic acid transferred from the first sample to any remaining portion of the second sample in the second sample vial.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein decontamination is achieved by wiping with a liquid absorbent material.

33. The method of claim 31 wherein decontaminating is achieved by contacting the surface with liquid decontaminating solution.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein said liquid decontaminating solution is a disinfectant.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein the disinfectant is a solution of bleach.

36. The method of claim 31 wherein the instrument contains a filter cap assembly which is subjected to decontamination.

37. The method of claim 31 wherein after step d) the remainder of the second sample in the second sample vial is subjected to nucleic acid amplification.

38. The method of claim 31 wherein the sample is selected from the group consisting of a blood containing sample, a cervical cells containing sample, and a fine needle biopsy containing sample.